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ABSTRACT

Offered to groups that wish to review and improve educational programs, this booklet reprints by special permission the "Standards for Basic Skills Writing Programs" developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and "Standards for an Effective Oral Communication Program" prepared by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Speech Communications Association. "Standards for Basic Skills Writing Programs" contains an operational definition of writing and 19 standards covering teaching and learning, support, and program evaluation. "Standards for an Effective Oral Communication Program" contains a definition and 29 standards covering basic assumptions, teaching and learning, support, and assessment and evaluation. An annotated bibliography concludes the booklet. (SR)

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Oral and Written Communications

National Standards

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NATIONAL STANDARDS
FOR
ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Preface

Through special permission, the Oral and Written Communications Task Force of the Instructional Programs and Services Division has reprinted the Standards For A Basic Skills Writing Program developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and Standards For An Effective Oral Communication Program prepared by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Speech Communications Association.

These standards are offered to groups that wish to review and improve educational programs. School administrators, teachers, and curriculum study committees will find them helpful as a starting point in identifying strengths and weaknesses of existing programs and the environment of support throughout the school.

We solicit help in our efforts to disseminate this document and we encourage local educators to study and make use of it. Extra copies of these standards and additional materials to help you improve instruction in oral and written communications are available through your educational service district.

STANDARDS FOR BASIC SKILLS WRITING PROGRAMS

The following standards were developed by a specially selected committee of teachers, supervisors, and writing specialists for use by states and school districts establishing comprehensive literacy plans. The National Council of Teachers of English urges study of these standards as a means of determining that plans attend not only to effective practice within the classroom but also to the environment of support for writing instruction throughout the school and the community. If effective instruction in writing is to be achieved, all the standards need to be studied and provided for in shaping comprehensive literacy plans.

At a time of growing concern for the quality of writing in the society, it is important to take the most effective approaches to quality in school writing programs. These standards will help states and school districts assure that efforts to be undertaken will indeed lead to improvement.

"Writing can be a deeply personal act of shaping our perception of the world and our relationships to people and things in that world. Thus, writing serves both public and personal needs of students, and it warrants the full, generous and continuing effort of all teachers."

National Council of Teachers of English

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF WRITING

Writing is the process of selecting, combining, arranging and developing ideas in effective sentences, paragraphs, and often, longer units of discourse. The process requires the writer to cope with a number of variables: method of development (narrating, explaining, describing, reporting and persuading); tone (from very personal to quite formal); form (from a limerick to a formal letter to a long research report); purpose (from discovering and expressing personal feelings and values to conducting the impersonal "business" of everyday life); possible audiences (oneself, classmates, a teacher, "the world"). Learning to write and to write increasingly well involves developing increasing skill and sensitivity in selecting from and combining these variables to shape particular messages. It also involves learning to conform to conventions of the printed language, appropriate to the age of the writer and to the form, purpose and tone of the message.

Beyond the pragmatic purpose of shaping messages to others, writing can be a means of self-discovery, of finding out what we believe, know, and cannot find words or circumstances to say to others.

"...to provide students with the opportunity to achieve those skills which are generally recognized as requisite to learning. Those skills shall include the ability:

- (1) To distinguish, interpret and make use of words, numbers and other symbols, including sound, colors, shapes, and textures;*
- (2) To organize words and other symbols into acceptable verbal and nonverbal forms of expression, and numbers into their appropriate functions;..."*

The Washington Basic Education Act of 1977

TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. There is evidence that knowledge of current theory and research in writing has been sought and applied in developing the writing program.
2. Writing instruction is a substantial and clearly identified part of an integrated English language arts curriculum.
3. Writing is called for in other subject matters across the curriculum.
4. The subject matter of writing has its richest source in the students' personal, social, and academic interest and experiences.
5. Students write in many forms (e.g., essays, notes, summaries, poems, letters, stories, reports, scripts, journals).
6. Students write for a variety of audiences (e.g., self, classmates, the community, the teacher) to learn that approaches vary as audiences vary.
7. Students write for a wide range of purposes (e.g., to inform, to persuade, to express the self, to explore, to clarify thinking).
8. Class time is devoted to all aspects of the writing process: generating ideas, drafting, revising, and editing.
9. All students receive instruction in both (a) developing and expressing ideas and (b) using the conventions of edited American English.
10. Control of the conventions of edited American English (supporting skills such as spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and grammatical usage) is developed primarily during the writing process and secondarily through related exercises.
11. Students receive constructive responses--from the teacher and from others--at various stages in the writing process.
12. Evaluation of individual writing growth:
 - (a) is based on complete pieces of writing;
 - (b) reflects informed judgments, first, about clarity and content and then about conventions of spelling, mechanics, and usage;
 - (c) includes regular responses to individual pieces of student writing as well as periodic assessment measuring growth over a period of time.

SUPPORT

1. Teachers with major responsibility for writing instruction receive continuing education reflecting current knowledge about the teaching of writing.
2. Teachers of other subjects receive information and training in ways to make use of and respond to writing in their classes.
3. Parent and community groups are informed about the writing program and about ways in which they can support it.
4. School and class schedules provide sufficient time to assure that the writing process is thoroughly pursued.
5. Teachers and students have access to and make regular use of a wide range of resources (e.g., library services, media, teaching materials, duplicating facilities, supplies) for support of the writing program.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. Evaluation of the writing program focuses on before and after the program sampling of complete pieces of writing, utilizing a recognized procedure (e.g., holistic rating, the Diederich scale, primary trait scoring) to arrive at reliable judgments about the quality of the program.
2. Evaluation of the program might also include assessment of a sample of student attitudes; gathering of pertinent quantitative data (e.g., frequency of student writing, time devoted to writing activities); and observational data (evidence of prewriting activities, class anthologies, writing folders, and student writing displays).

STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS

Adequate oral communication frequently determines an individual's educational, social and vocational success. Yet, American education has typically neglected formal instruction in the basic skills of speaking and listening. It is important that state and local education agencies implement the most effective oral communication programs possible.

On the following pages are standards for oral communication developed by representatives of the Speech Communication Association and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

If effective oral communication programs are going to be developed, all components of the recommended standards must be considered. Implementation of these standards will facilitate development of adequate and appropriate oral communication necessary for educational, social and vocational success.

"As a result of the process of education, all students should have the basic skills and knowledge necessary to seek information, to present ideas, to listen to and interact with others, and to use judgment and imagination in perceiving and resolving problems."

.Goals for Washington Common Schools

DEFINITION

Oral Communication: the process of interacting through heard and spoken messages in a variety of situations.

Effective oral communication is a learned behavior, involving the following processes:

1. Speaking in a variety of education and social situations: Speaking involves, but is not limited to, arranging and producing messages through the use of voice, articulation, vocabulary, syntax and nonverbal cues (gesture, facial expression, vocal cues) appropriate to the speaker and listeners.
2. Listening in a variety of educational and social situations: Listening involves, but is not limited to, hearing, perceiving, discriminating, interpreting, synthesizing, evaluating, organizing and remembering information from verbal and nonverbal messages.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. Oral communication behaviors of students can be improved through direct instruction.
2. Oral communication instruction emphasizes the interactive nature of speaking and listening.
3. Oral communication instruction addresses the everyday communication needs of students and includes emphasis on the classroom as a practical communication environment.
4. There is a wide range of communication competence among speakers of the same language.
5. Communication competence is not dependent upon use of a particular form of language.
6. A primary goal of oral communication instruction is to increase the students' repertoire and use of effective speaking and listening behaviors.
7. Oral communication programs provide instruction based on a coordinated developmental continuum of skills, preschool through adult.
8. Oral communication skills can be enhanced by using parents, supportive personnel, and appropriate instructional technology.

TEACHING/LEARNING

1. The oral communication program is based on current theory and research in speech and language development, psycholinguistics, rhetorical and communication theory, communication disorders, speech science, and related fields of study.
2. Oral communication instruction is a clearly identifiable part of the curriculum.
3. Oral communication instruction is systematically related to reading and writing instruction and to instruction in the various content areas.
4. The relevant academic, personal and social experiences of students provide core subject matter for the oral communication program.
5. Oral communication instruction provides a wide range of speaking and listening experiences, in order to develop effective communication skills appropriate to:
 - (a) a range of situations; informal to formal, interpersonal to mass communication.
 - (b) a range of purposes; informing, learning, persuading, evaluating, messages, facilitating social interaction, sharing feelings, imaginative and creative expression.
 - (c) a range of audiences; classmates, teachers, peers, employers, family, community.
 - (d) a range of communication forms; conversation, group discussion, interview, drama, debate, public speaking, oral interpretation.
 - (e) a range of speaking styles; impromptu, extemporaneous, and reading from manuscript.
6. The oral communication program provides class time for systematic instruction in oral communication skills, such as critical listening, selecting, arranging and presenting messages, giving and receiving constructive feedback, nonverbal communication.
7. The oral communication program includes development of adequate and appropriate language, articulation, voice fluency and listening skills necessary for success in educational career, and social situations through regular classroom instruction, co-curricular activities, and speech-language pathology and audiology services.
8. Oral communication program instruction encourages and provides appropriate opportunities for the reticent student (one who is excessively fearful in speaking situations) to participate more effectively in oral communication.

SUPPORT

1. Oral communication instruction is provided by individuals adequately trained in oral communication and/or communication disorders, as evidenced by appropriate certification.
2. Individuals responsible for oral communication instruction receive continuing education on theories, research and instruction relevant to communication.
3. Individuals responsible for oral communication instruction participate actively in conventions, meetings, publications, and other activities of communication professionals.
4. The oral communication program includes a system for training classroom teachers to identify and refer students who do not have adequate listening and speaking skills, or are reticent, to those qualified individuals who can best meet the needs of the student through further assessment and/or instruction.
5. Teachers in all curriculum areas receive information on appropriate methods for:
 - (a) using oral communication to facilitate instruction, and
 - (b) using the subject matter to improve students' oral communication skills.
6. Teachers in all curriculum areas receive education and training to develop effective communication environments in their classrooms.
7. Parent and community groups are informed about and provided with appropriate materials for effective involvement in the oral communication program.
8. The oral communication program is facilitated by availability and use of appropriate instructional materials, equipment and facilities.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

1. The oral communication program is based on a school-wide assessment of the speaking and listening needs of students.
2. Speaking and listening needs of students will be determined by qualified personnel utilizing appropriate evaluation tools for the skills to be assessed, and educational levels of students being assessed.
3. Evaluation of student progress in oral communication is based upon a variety of data including observations, self-evaluations, listeners' responses to messages, and formal tests.
4. Evaluation of students' oral communication encourages, rather than discourages, students' desires to communicate, by emphasizing those behaviors which students can improve, thus enhancing their ability to do so.
5. Evaluation of the total oral communication program is based on achievement of acceptable levels of oral communication skill determined by continuous monitoring of student progress in speaking and listening, use of standardized and criterion-referenced tests, audience-based rating scales, and other appropriate instruments.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

These materials are available to assist school districts in oral and written communication programs. They may be obtained at your Educational Service District.

Development of Functional Communication Competencies: Pre-K - Grade 6, ed. by Barbara Sundene Wood. Speech Communication Association, 1977.

Development of Functional Communication Competencies: Grades 7-12, ed. by Barbara Sundene Wood. Speech Communication Association, 1977.

Provides teachers with the best educational theory and/or research and presents descriptions of classroom activities which assist the teacher in putting this theory into practice.

Handbook for Planning an Effective Writing Program: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve. California State Department of Education, 1982.

Provides school administrators and teachers with a standard for assessing their existing writing programs and a tool for helping them design new programs. Both the content and teaching strategies of a writing program K-12 are addressed.

How to Help Your Child Become a Better Writer. National Council of Teachers of English.

Suggestions for parents on becoming an active participant in their child's education as a writer. Divided into two sections: "Things to do at Home" and "Things to do for School Writing Programs."

National Standards for Oral and Written Communications. Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1982.

A reprint of the Standards for a Basic Skills Writing Program (NCTE) and Standards for an Effective Oral Communication Program (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Speech Communications Association). Helpful as a starting point in identifying strengths and weaknesses of existing programs and the environment of support throughout the school.

Developing Oral Communication Skills. Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1982.

Includes two papers and a bibliography on oral communication. "Developing Oral Communication Skills, K-12" by Jody Nyquist and Barbara Clinton, is supportive material to the Wood series (Development of Functional Communication Competencies) and assists the practitioner in implementing effective oral communications skills which can be expected of students. The introduction by Phil Backlund and John Johnson includes some thoughts on speech communication research.

Saying it with Sounds and Symbols: Oral and Written Communications Framework. Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1982.

Provides a starting point for program review. Includes State Board of Education Goals for Common Schools, Program Goals, Responsibilities for Learning, and a Preliminary Evaluation Procedure.

Studying: A Key To Success....Ways Parents Can Help, by Ann Erickson. International Reading Association.

Gives tips on ways parents can help their children in learning to study effectively.

Writing Programs in Washington State. Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1982.

Includes a research synthesis on effective writing programs, followed by abstracts of classroom writing programs, including mini-grant projects. Bibliography.

Writing in the Schools: Improvement Through Effective Leadership, by Allan A. Glatthorn. National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1981.

Written for the administrator, this book describes the writing process--how to improve writing, how to supervise its instruction and how to evaluate a writing program.

Your Home is Your Child's First School, by Norma Rogers. International Reading Association. (Adapted from How Can I Help My Child Get Ready to Read?)

Suggestions for parents in assisting their children in the development of reading skills.



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